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IL CODICE VERCELLESE CON OMELIE E POESIE IN LINGUA ANGLOSASSONE per concessione del Ven. Capitolo Metropolitano di Vercelli la prima volta interamente riprodotto in fototipia a cura della Biblioteca Vaticana con introduzione del Prof. Dott. Massimiliano Foerster dell' Università di Lipsia. Roma, Danesi (Via dei Bagni). 1913. 4to. Pp. LXX +136(272).

DER VERCELLI-CODEX CXVII nebst Abdruck einiger altenglischer Homilien der Handschrift von Max Förster. Studien zur englischen Philologie, Heft I, Lorenz Morsbach gewidmet, pp. 20-179. Halle a.S., Max Niemeyer. 1913.

Almost exactly ninety years after its 'discovery' by Dr. Blume, the entire Vercelli Codex CXVII has been reproduced in this magnificent phototype volume with the distinguished name of Max Förster attached to it. The six poems contained in the manuscript had been edited a number of times—some of them proving, indeed, especial favorites in college and university classes—and even a facsimile text of them had been provided by Wölker in 1894 (*Codex Vercellensis, die angelsächsische Handschrift zu Vercelli in getreuer Nachbildung*). But, strange to say, the twenty-three prose homilies were allowed all those years to remain in hiding, save for the incidental printing of two short pieces (*Anglia* V, 464 f., and Gonser's *Guthlac*, pp. 117 ff.) and the helpful lexical gleanings embodied in Napier's well-known *Contributions to Old English Lexicography* (1906). Now the entire manuscript has been placed at the disposal of students, and although very likely only few individuals may find it practicable to procure a copy of their own, no public library appealing to scholars will be able to dispense with this exceedingly important publication.

The photographic reproduction is a thoroughly faithful one. It was deemed necessary, indeed, to reduce the size of the page by one-third—only two pages being given in full size—but otherwise scrupulous care has been taken to furnish as far as might be a real duplicate of the original. No attempt has been made (as was done in the Wölker publication) to improve the appearance of certain places by retouching and thus to make the facsimile look clearer than the manuscript itself. We thus have an almost perfect picture of the venerable, though by no means ornamental codex, exhibiting the clear and remarkably accurate handwriting of a single scribe who was at work on it some time "in the latter half, or about the close, of the tenth century."

Professor Förster's own work appears in the *Introduction*,—on the whole an Italian translation of the German text included in the Morsbach *Festschrift*. It consists practically of

two main parts, viz. a general introduction, or a discussion of the manuscript as a whole, and a special introduction, or a description of the different texts composing it. Two further parts are added in the German version, viz. a critical edition of five homilies (pp. 87-148) and a list of supplementary lexical notes (pp. 149-179).

Of this Introduction it is impossible to speak too highly. Every page of it shows the hand of the trained expert and sagacious philologist, who weighs impartially every fact capable of throwing light on a problem and who proceeds to his conclusions in a manner which is likely to convince and certain to instruct.¹

Of the five sections of the general introduction, the one on the provenance and history of the manuscript naturally commands our especial interest. How did this Anglo-Saxon manuscript come to reach Vercelli? Various answers have been supplied by previous investigators. Förster examines the different hypotheses which have been proposed, or might be proposed, and in particular takes issue with the famous 'Guala theory,' ingeniously developed by Cook, which may be found conveniently stated in Krapp's edition of *Andreas* (pp. X-XIV) and very briefly summarized in Cook's edition of *The Dream of the Rood* (pp. V f.). That the so-called Vercelli codex should have been taken from England to Italy by Cardinal Guala Bicchieri, Papal Legate in England from 1216 to 1218, or should have found its way to Vercelli in consequence of the cultural relations established by him between the two countries, is indeed admitted as a possibility. But, while doing full justice to the arguments in favor of this widely accepted theory, Förster brings forward a number of more or less serious objections. Thus, the style of the church of St. Andrew at Vercelli which was founded by Guala, has been shown by the French archeologist C. Enlart to point not to England, but directly to the North of France. Again, there is no evidence to indicate that the volume ever belonged to the church of St. Andrew; it is preserved in the cathedral library of Vercelli and, in all probability, formed part of it at least as early as 1602. Moreover, Cardinal Guala was a man exclusively interested in French scholarship and culture, who filled the monastery of St. Andrew with French Augustinians and who cannot be supposed to have had the slightest understanding of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts. In fact, even native Englishmen of his time were sorely deficient in that respect, and it is pretty safe to say that the period from the thirteenth to the fifteenth

¹ It is to be regretted that the Italian printing office did not take the trouble to provide the Anglo-Saxon characters *b* and *ð*; *th* and *dh* are poor substitutes in a learned treatise on an Anglo-Saxon manuscript.

century is the most unlikely one to which the passing of the manuscript from England to Italy could be ascribed. The negative part of Förster's argumentation is followed by a constructive essay, which aims to supply the missing link in the chain of evidence connecting the southern with the northern country. It is definitely established (by a notice entered in an almost contemporaneous handwriting) that a tenth century manuscript (Codex no. CLXXXI) of the cathedral library of Vercelli had been formerly in the possession of abbot Erkanbald of Fulda, who at one time (between 997 and 1011) loaned it to bishop Henry I of Würzburg. From either Würzburg or Fulda the volume could easily be transferred to Vercelli, since the intercourse between Germany and Upper Italy was exceedingly close in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. It is known, e.g., that abbot Erkanbald in 989 accompanied emperor Otto III to Italy, and that in 1002 bishop Leo of Vercelli appeared in a Bavarian town (perhaps Regensburg) before emperor Henry II. Considering, on the other hand, that both Fulda and Würzburg were flourishing centers of the Irish-Anglo-Saxon mission, that Fulda, in Traube's words, was altogether British in its culture, and that ancient English manuscripts were brought to those German monasteries, it is easy to see that our Vercelli codex could very well have passed from England to Italy by way of either of those places. For the details of this whole discussion the reader is referred to Förster's own presentation, which is a model of philological method.

Regarding the diversity of linguistic forms found in the manuscript—West Saxon, with an admixture of Anglian and some Kentish forms—the editor offers a noteworthy, though merely tentative explanation. He observes that the same sort of mixture occurs in the copies of Wulfstan's homilies made by Wulfgeat, namely the Oxford MSS Junius 121, Hatton 113, and Hatton 114. Since in the latter instance the author and the scribe belonged to the same locality, i.e. Worcester, it stands to reason that the dialectal mixture of the homilies cannot be owing to their transcription from one dialect into another, but represents the normal orthography used in the Worcester *scriptoria*, though not necessarily the language actually current in that district. Thus it seems entirely possible, to say the least, that the *codex Vercellensis* was also written in Worcester, which, in the latter half of the tenth century, enjoyed an unusual reputation for literary and educational activity. Of course, the question of the original dialect or dialects of the texts contained in the codex is not affected by these considerations.

Turning to the description of the individual texts, the twenty-three homilies and six poems, we note that Förster has provided an admirable, concise introduction to each piece, including a statement of its contents, parallel versions, sources,

and bibliographical data. Naturally the remarks on the poetical texts are of the briefest, but nevertheless of great interest, setting forth, as they do, Förster's own views on doubtful and debated matters. The future author of a new, up-to-date *Grundriss* will find this part a distinctly valuable source of information.

Of the two sections added in the German version, i.e. a critical edition of the second, sixth, ninth, fifteenth, and twenty-second homilies, and a group of lexical gleanings augmented by items drawn from other sources, suffice it to say that they fully meet the most rigid requirements of scholarship. We venture to hope that the former is merely a preliminary instalment, and that it will be possible for Professor Förster before long to give us the complete and authoritative edition we have been waiting for.

In conclusion, just a few minor details will be briefly touched. In the description of the Last Judgment, Hom. II, fol. 10^b, 1.5 f. (Edition, p. 90), mention is made of *hellwarena dream*, so in the parallel text, Hom. XXI, fol. 115^b, 1.8 (*ib.*, 1.10: *þara manna dream*). The genuineness of this *dream* is very questionable. The correct reading is presumably preserved in the corresponding Wulfstan text, 186.7: *helwara hream*, Var. *ream* (which should by no means be altered to *dream*); 186.9: *þara manna man*. Cf., e.g., Crist 594: *swa mid Dryhten dream swa mid deoflum hream*, and see *Mod. Lang. Notes* xxvi, 141-3. The double alliteration of the second half-line in this metrical passage will hardly be considered a serious obstacle.—In Hom. IX, fol. 61^a, 1.20 (Edition, p. 101), I would place a comma before *ac* instead of a period: *þas egesfullican dæges tocyme, on ðam we sculon Gode riht agifan for ealles ures lifes dædum . . . forðan þe we nu magon bēhydan and behelian ura dæda, ac hie bioð þonne opena and unwrigena*. The desirability of this change was recently brought home to me when I saw this passage quoted as an example of the adversative function of *forðan*: “in spite of the fact that we conceal the evil deeds in this life” (Marjorie Daunt, *Mod. Lang. Review* xiii, 477). To me this rather looks like a characteristic case of paratactic construction: ‘since we can now [indeed] conceal them, but they will be revealed on doomsday.’—The unique *geonsið* ‘departure,’ Hom. XXI, fol. 112^b, 1.12: *øfter hyra geon siðe* is rendered still more interesting by the fact that *on* has been inserted (above the line) between *geon* and *siðe*. Evidently the scribe vacillated between *geon-* and *heonon-sið*.—On p. 171 Förster cites, from Bede 310.10, the noun *ontimbernes* (however, in MS T: *intimbernes(se)*, C: *intimbrunes(se)*), ‘Erbauung,’ ‘Belehrung,’ which puts us in mind of the well-known metaphorical use of *(ge)timbran* = aedificare, instruere, ‘edify,’ German ‘erbauen,’ as found, e.g., in Bede 140.13, *Chrodegang*

58.6, 127.9. As regards this particular formation, *in-timbernes*, I suspect that it is merely an ultra-literal rendering of the Latin *in-structio* (IV, c. 17), neither better nor worse than *on-ben* = in-*precatio*, Bede 104.3 (II, c.2). Cf. *intimbran* = *instruere*, Bede 478.10, *ontimbran* = *instituere*, *ib.* 458.20 (MS B: *intimbrigenne*), etc. On the other hand, *on-*, *an(d)-timber* 'material' seems a *bona fide* Old English form, repeatedly found as translation of *materia*: thus, e.g., Wright-Wülcker, *Vocab.* I, 447.4, Chrodegang 76.34. Also *untimber* of the Vercelli codex, fol. 73^b, 1.22 is very justly corrected by Förster to *an(d)timber*. As to *ontimbernesse*, fol. 81^b, 1.14, answering to *materia* (Förster, p. 119), its redundant suffix was perhaps thoughtlessly added by the scribe on account of the immediately preceding *genihtsumnesse*.—May not *ðrahlic*, instanced (p. 175) from MS. Vesp. D. xiv, fol. 76^b, be credited with the meaning of 'full of hardship,' 'distressing'? It fits the context admirably: *swyðe mycele ungeðwærnysse and ðrahlice witen*. Cf. *Mod. Phil.* III, 254, *Mod. Lang. Notes* xxxi, 428.—A rare compound, which so far seems to have been known from Napier's *Old English Glosses* only, is met with on fol. 113^b, 1.25: *hu he ðone deofol on helle mid his wæg-gesiðum ofþrihte*; cf. *OE. Gl.* 861 and 2.18: *satellites = weggesiþan*.

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THE AMERICAN LANGUAGE. A Preliminary Inquiry into the Development of English in the United States. By H. L. Mencken, New York. Alfred A. Knopf MCMXIX, pp. VIII, 374.

With keen interest the reviewer took this book into his hands and with keen and sustained interest he read it thru from beginning to end. Tho it turned out quite different from what he expected and hoped he acknowledges gladly his indebtedness for its rich contents and the message that it brings. The difference in the point of view of the author and that of the present reviewer is so great that the task of reviewing is difficult, but there is such a strong bond of sympathy between author and reviewer established by their common love of their native American English and their common desire to see it recognized and cherished that there will be little danger that the reviewer will be intentionally unjust and severe in his criticism.

The author is and has been since early manhood an editor of newspapers, magazines and books and a book critic, and has a large acquaintance with the current literature and speech of England and America. He has read what he could find on American English and has collected many observations of his own.